

During my tenure as Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee from 1989 through 1994, David was a fixture at our hearings, sitting at the elbow of my Republican colleagues John Paul Hammerschmidt and William Clinger. As we crafted some of the most important aviation law of our time, including the Aviation Security Improvement Act of 1990 and the Aviation Noise and Capacity Act of 1990, David was always at the negotiating table, working with my staff and me toward the common goal of effective legislation.

As the Majority Counsel for the Aviation Subcommittee, David was instrumental in crafting the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21), Federal Aviation Authorization Act of 1996, the Aviation Medical Assistance Act, Pilot Records Improvement Act, Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act, and the Aviation and Transportation Security Act.

His bipartisan, non-confrontational approach to crafting legislation, his painstaking attention to detail, and his mastery of the subject matter has been most impressive and has been greatly appreciated by my staff, and by me.

I know that his work has required great personal sacrifice and I commend him for his unwavering commitment to excellence. I wish him nothing but the best as he moves on to the next phase of his exemplary career.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, during my service as a Member of Congress, I have from time to time worked with the Export-Import Bank on matters particularly important to significant employers within my district. In an ideal world, there would be no subsidies of any sort for exports. But in the real world which we inhabit, Americans seeking business elsewhere often confront heavy subsidies from other countries, and without an instrumentality like the Export-Import Bank, these American enterprises would be at an unfair disadvantage. The Export-Import Bank's existence enables many American companies to compete on even terms, with good results both for the companies that provide goods and services and those that benefit from them. For example, several years ago I was proud to work with the Export-Import Bank to make it possible for the Raytheon Corporation to receive a major contract in Brazil, which allowed Raytheon to use its technical skills for environmental purposes. Without Export-Import Bank aid, the Raytheon effort would have been unsuccessful, not through any fault of their own, but because of heavy subsidies from the national governments of competitors.

Most recently, I was glad to join several of my Massachusetts and New Hampshire colleagues in urging the Export-Import Bank to show support in a meaningful way for the Malden Mills Company, whose owner, Aaron Feuerstein, has justly drawn widespread praise for his combination of economic wisdom and social responsibility. I was pleased that the Export-Import Bank did respond in ways that were very important in this situation, and I am pleased that we have this entity in

place to provide this kind of essential assistance to American companies who would otherwise be facing unfairness.

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD P. RAMEY

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, with great sorrow I rise today to recognize Richard P. Ramey, an Ohio citizen from my district, who gave his life fighting for our country. On Sunday, February 8th, 2004, in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Ramey was killed by a roadside bomb.

From training as a boy scout to his position on the Perry High School football team and then as a member of the Army, Staff Sergeant Ramey grew to be a leader. He graduated from high school in 1995 and began his career serving in the Army that same year. He was carrying on a family tradition in military service.

This outstanding young man showed courage and a commitment to protect those who could not protect themselves. Those who knew him recognized how proud he was to serve in the military. Staff Sergeant Ramey is a true hero and a reminder of the dedication evidenced by all the men and women all over the world fighting the war on terror. We must reflect on this great life and all the good that is being done in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Ramey and his family will be forever in our hearts and prayers. May we keep them in mind as they struggle through this difficult period of mourning.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO EXEMPT NEW MEXICO FROM THE COMPARATIVE COST ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to exempt my home state of New Mexico from the Comparative Cost Adjustment (CCA), or "premium support" provisions included in the recently passed Medicare Prescription Drug Bill. I am pleased to introduce this bill as companion legislation to a bill that Senator JEFF BINGAMAN is introducing in the other chamber today.

Mr. Speaker, when the House passed H.R. 1 at the end of November, I strongly opposed this legislation and voted accordingly. Today, I stand here still as strongly opposed to the newly implemented law as I did when we passed the bill the first two times it came to the floor last year. One of my strongest objections to the legislation was the inclusion of the CCA program, which requires the Medicare fee-for-service program to compete against the new Medicare Advantage program. This CCA program will last for 6 years and will be applied in a limited number of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

This provision is one of the worst in what was an extremely disappointing piece of legis-

lation. Not only does this provision undercut the Medicare program, it outright threatens it by taking it down the road toward privatization. Rather than defined benefits beginning in 2010, seniors would receive a set premium payment—like a voucher—from the government, based on a combination of the process private plans charged and the cost of Medicare fee-for-service in their area. Seniors would enroll in either a private plan or fee-for-service, but those who picked a plan that was more expensive than the defined premium contribution would need to pay the difference out of their own pocket. This is not the way the Medicare program has been run in the past and its not the way it should run in the future.

In order to ensure that New Mexico's seniors keep their defined benefit plans when the time comes for the CCA to go into effect, I am introducing this legislation today. This legislation will exempt regions of New Mexico from being one of the MSA's used as part of the CCA program. Many studies have shown that a likely outcome of these privatization provisions in the new law is that seniors will have to pay more than they do now to stay in fee-for-service.

Mr. Speaker, these demonstration plans will dramatically alter the Medicare landscape for our seniors. For the first time in the history of Medicare, seniors would end up paying different premiums for the exact same fee-for-service benefit. I don't want New Mexico's seniors, or our nation's seniors facing the end of the safety and security they have come to know under the Medicare program.

Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. BINGAMAN and I are not the only members in our respective chamber's who feel this way. Several other Senators and Members have either introduced or are preparing to introduce similar legislation. I hope the leadership of each chamber recognizes the danger of the CCA program and takes action to protect New Mexico and our nation's seniors.

TRIBUTE TO ARKANSAS TROOPS AT FT. POLK, LA

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my deep appreciation for the contributions of Arkansas National Guardsmen currently training at Ft. Polk Louisiana preparing for deployment to Iraq and their families who await their safe return.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit these fine men and women and witness their training. Designed to mimic what the troops will face in the field, their exercises are impressive in scope and in our troops' ability to accomplish the monumental tasks regularly laid before them.

More impressive than the accomplishments, however, were dedicated Arkansans; far from home and preparing to go farther. They did not complain about living in tents, carrying heavy gear or the long days of hard training. And when this country called them to service, they did not hesitate.

As they prepare for their mission, it is imperative we consider more than their coming task,

we must remember who they are. They are fathers, mothers, sons and daughters who will soon be in harm's way. In Arkansas—and elsewhere—they have families who love them and communities that will miss them.

We cannot thank these brave men and women enough for their sacrifice. We can only salute their commitment and do what we can to support them when they return. On behalf of Congress, I extend our deepest gratitude to our men and women in uniform.

HONORING SUPERINTENDENT BILL MCNEAL

HON. BRAD MILLER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the public schools are where we deliver on the promise of equality of opportunity. Today I rise to honor a man who has been delivering on that promise throughout his 29 years of service to Wake County public schools.

Bill McNeal has served Wake County kids in every capacity—as a social studies teacher, a principal, and a county administrator. After 3 years at the helm of our school system, folks back home knew we were lucky to have him as our school superintendent.

Now our secret is out. This week the American Association of School Administrators named Bill McNeal the National Superintendent of the Year.

Superintendent Bill McNeal has proven that even the loftiest ambitions can be met with hard work, boundless determination, and strong leadership. A key author of Wake County's ambitious Goal 2003 program, he has delivered results.

In 1998, 75.4 percent of Wake's third graders were testing at or above grade level in math. In 2003, 93.5 percent achieved the mark. Wake's fourth and fifth graders fared even better, with 95 percent achieving at or above grade level scores. Last year, Wake's high school students averaged a 1067 SAT score, the highest average ever in the school district.

Even more remarkable has been Bill McNeal's campaign to narrow the achievement gap for Wake's diverse and ever expanding student population. The achievement gap in math for students on free or reduced lunch shrank from 35 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2003 and in reading shrank from 35 percent in 1998 to 21 percent in 2003—all while student performance has increased across the board.

Not one to sit back and enjoy these successes, Bill McNeal recently implemented the Goal 2008 program to continue to push ahead. He has outlined a blueprint to increase student achievement across the district's elementary, middle, and high schools over the next 5 years. His goal is to have 95 percent of all students in grades 3 through 12 at or above grade level by 2008.

Mr. Speaker, we are honored by Bill McNeal's service to our kids and our community, and I look forward to working with him and our dedicated administrators, teachers, and parents to deliver on the promise of equality of opportunity.

HONORING JAMES A. "BUDDY" CONNER

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize James A. "Buddy" Conner, who has contributed some 45 years of service to the defense of our Nation as a leader, a worker, and a soldier.

Mr. Conner is retiring from a 43-year career with BWX Technologies, where he rose from his first assignment as an associate engineer and technician to become one of the company's four highest-ranking executives.

Mr. Conner was born in Appomattox, Virginia, and after finishing his primary education, devoted two years of service to the United States Marine Corps.

Upon his arrival back home, Mr. Conner took a short trip west to the town of Lynchburg and began working at the recently built Nuclear Facilities Plant while he earned his business degree from Lynchburg College. He would spend the next 40 years at that site, eventually leading the Naval Nuclear Fuel Division, which supplies the United States Navy with all of its nuclear fuel. During his tenure, in 2000, Mr. Conner joined the BWXT team vying for the operations contract for the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. For Buddy, this was a chance to lead a facility that is still as monumentally important in our nation's defense as it was during one of our country's biggest security successes, the Manhattan Project.

BWXT won the contract, and Mr. Conner has spent the last three years helping to ensure the site will continue to be the unique jewel in America's first line of nuclear defense. When America has called on Buddy and Y-12 to provide stewardship and security to a safe and reliable stockpile of nuclear weapon components and materials, they have stood at the ready.

Since taking the helm of the operating contract for the site, Buddy and his management team have lead Y-12 into an exciting new era. From modernization plans that are transforming our country's Fort Knox of highly enriched uranium into an efficient storage and production facility, to the renewal of the worker's spirit and enthusiasm through aggressive recruitment and mentoring programs that are bringing in the future of Y-12—Buddy and company have set Y-12 on a fantastic course.

Mr. Conner rose through the ranks of one of our premier defense contractors because of his intelligence, dedication, and outstanding work ethic. In short: he is the real deal.

Mr. Conner's 45 years of devotion to our Nation's security are not to be forgotten. That is why today I am proud to recognize Mr. Conner's efforts for his years of service to the defense of our country.

OBSERVING THE PASSING OF AMERICA'S "OLDEST MAN"

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today Maryland mourns the loss of William Coates, thought to

be the oldest man in America and certainly someone who made a lifetime of contributions to our state.

Mr. Coates was born in Maryland on June 2, 1889 and lived to see many of our nation's most important moments, including the Wright Brothers' first flight, the Great Depression, two World Wars, the Civil Rights movement and the Space age.

Over the span of his life in our great state, Mr. Coates worked with the Maryland State Highway Department in the 1930s building roads for the state, and as a tobacco farmer on a variety of farms throughout Prince George's County including Claggett Farm in Upper Marlboro.

Mr. Coates leaves behind him a caring family of nine children, 21 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, many of whom still live in Prince George's County. His life, like the times he lived through, will long be fondly remembered by his family and friends and those of us who marveled at his longevity.

William Coates' extended and healthy life is also a tribute to a dedicated investment in medical research. Mr. Coates' life shows us that by investing in research, we can all improve our lives and our health.

William Coates has dedicated a life of service to our state and community, and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENCY

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my disappointment with Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan's remarks to the House Budget Committee regarding Social Security.

In his testimony, Chairman Greenspan suggests that possible remedies for the record deficits and \$7 trillion debt include increasing the Social Security retirement age and cutting benefits for future recipients.

I want my constituents to know that I will not support any proposal to decrease or eliminate Social Security, nor will I support an increase in the retirement age. Social Security is an entitlement—a right—for the millions of Americans who pay into the program with each and every paycheck. The government has made a commitment to seniors and current workers alike that Social Security will be available upon retirement. We cannot go back on our word.

In Rhode Island, Social Security provides a vital lifeline for a significant percentage of the population. Rhode Island ranks fifth in the nation for the percentage of residents over 75 and sixth in the nation for those over 65. In my district alone, 110,000 people rely on Social Security for their livelihood, and its importance will continue to grow as the baby boom generation begins to retire. Rhode Islanders spend their lives contributing to the vitality of our communities and our country—and paying into Social Security. They are entitled to the benefits they have earned and should not have to worry about whether Social Security will continue to be there when they need it.

Chairman Greenspan is right about one point: this country needs a "greater discipline"